



# Biovision's Farmer Communication Programme – Bridging the gap between agroecological research and its implementation

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Martin Schmid, Co-Head of Development Projects at Biovision



A magazine for sustainable agriculture in East Africa  
<http://www.theorganicfarmer.org>



# Introduction to Biovision



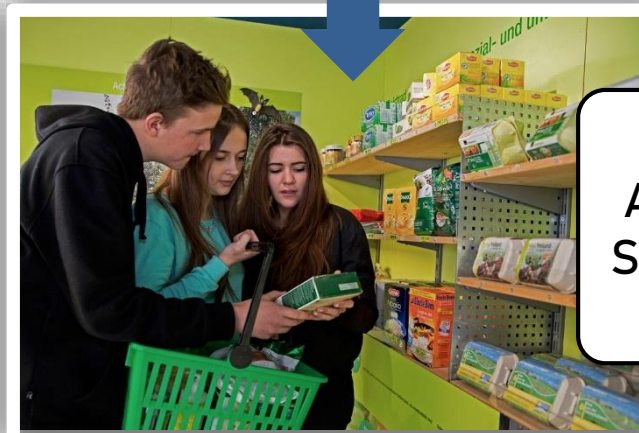
**We convince people to advocate for an agroecological transformation of food systems**

**Research &  
Validation of  
Ecological  
Solutions**



**National  
Dialogue &  
Global  
Advocacy**

**Dissemination  
& Transfer of  
Knowledge**



**Consumer  
Awareness &  
Sensitisation -  
CH**

*“How do farmers benefit from the research of scientists and their peers?”*

*“How can scientists & practitioners effectively disseminate valuable information?”*

*“How can we communicate the impact of such information and influence policymakers to make larger investments in Agroecological Research and Development?”*



The Farmer Communication Programme **bridges the gap** between information creation and access via a **two way** communication channel:

- Bringing relevant and usable information and knowledge to farmers,
- Carrying questions and comments back for processing and answers to reach farmers subsequently with targeted information.





# The Farmer Communication Programme is a multimedia platform for information on ecological agriculture in Kenya & Tanzania.



FARMER COMMUNICATION  
**Outreach**



**The Organic**  
FARMER MAGAZINE  
A magazine for sustainable agriculture in East Africa  
<http://www.theorganicfarmer.org>

**Mkulima Mbunifu**



**Infonet**  
biovision



**TOF Rad o**

# FCP bridges the gap between scientific research and its implementation through multiple channels

## Research



## Application



- Practical, ecologically sustainable
- Scientifically verified & up-to-date
- Locally adapted & relevant
- Based on farmer needs & feedback

## Started in 2005, FCP has built expertise in communicating with farmers and demonstrated success on several fronts



- 35,000 copies printed monthly
- Each copy is shared by 6 – 8 farmers
- Reaches 41 of 47 Counties in Kenya
- Strong links with scientific research and like-minded institutions. E.g., ICIPE, KOAN



### Mkulima Mbunifu

- 15,000 copies printed monthly and distributed in Tanzania.
- Each copy is shared by 5 – 6 farmers
- Over 5,000 followers on Facebook with high levels of engagement





## Started in 2005, FCP has built expertise in communicating with farmers and demonstrated success on several fronts



- 1 nationwide weekly programme and regular editions on four vernacular stations
- Potential reach of about 3 million listeners in Kenya
- Tailored to audience based on selection of priority value chains of Counties (vernacular programmes)



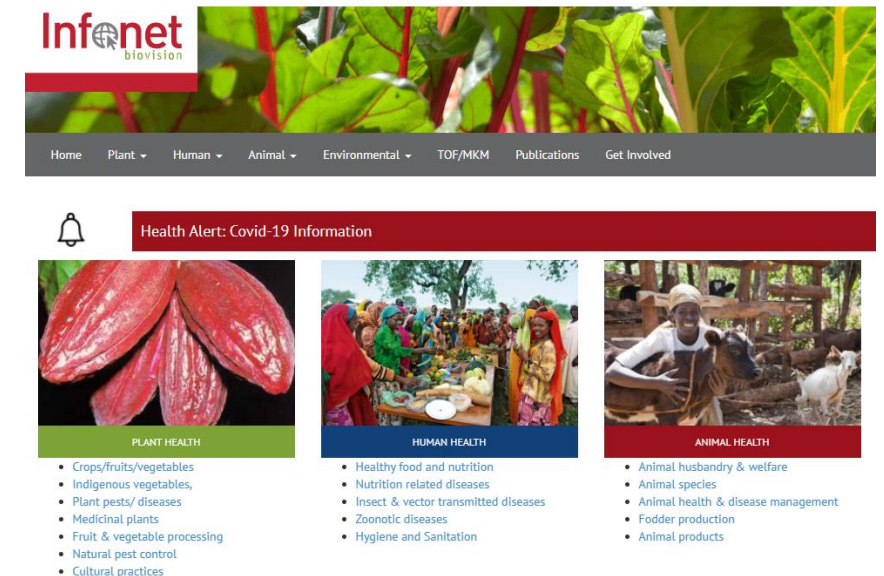
- Fills a gap in public extension services, with 11 farmer resource centers and 24 outreach staff
- About 4'500 farmers trained and supported annually on agroecological farming practices
- Practical, hands-on and regionally specific information shared with farmers and feedback collected



## Started in 2005, FCP has built expertise in communicating with farmers and demonstrated success on several fronts



- Over 300,000 online visitors annually to access locally adapted information on agroecological farming practices
- Strong links and use by government in Ministry of Agriculture and public extension officers
- Scientifically validated information provided by an international network of experts
- Available as online and offline version



The screenshot shows the Infonet biovision website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for Home, Plant, Human, Animal, Environmental, TOF/MKM, Publications, and Get Involved. Below the menu is a red banner with a bell icon and the text "Health Alert: Covid-19 Information". The main content area is divided into three columns: PLANT HEALTH, HUMAN HEALTH, and ANIMAL HEALTH. Each column has a list of topics related to that category.

**PLANT HEALTH**

- Crops/fruits/vegetables
- Indigenous vegetables,
- Plant pests/ diseases
- Medicinal plants
- Fruit & vegetable processing
- Natural pest control
- Cultural practices

**HUMAN HEALTH**

- Healthy food and nutrition
- Nutrition related diseases
- Insect & vector transmitted diseases
- Zoonotic diseases
- Hygiene and Sanitation

**ANIMAL HEALTH**

- Animal husbandry & welfare
- Animal species
- Animal health & disease management
- Fodder production
- Animal products

[www.infonet-biovision.ch](http://www.infonet-biovision.ch)



## Two-way communication: the Tusemezane Feedback System

(Tusemezane = “let’s talk”)

**Functional farmer response mechanism facilitating farmer feedback through voice calls, SMS, email and farmer listener groups**

- Web-based integrated system, that can record phone calls, store SMS and WhatsApp messages
- Analysis of feedbacks to identify trends and needs that farmers discuss and which further inform FCP
- Possibility to conduct SMS polls, TOF Magazine reader surveys, etc.
- Possibility to send bulk SMS or WhatsApp messages to farmers



## Results of an Impact Assessment of the monthly Mkulima Mbunifu magazine (MkM) in Tanzania (conducted in 2020)

Main question: **How readers of MkM progress from reading an interesting article, towards finally trying to implement a technology or advice in their farming practice?**

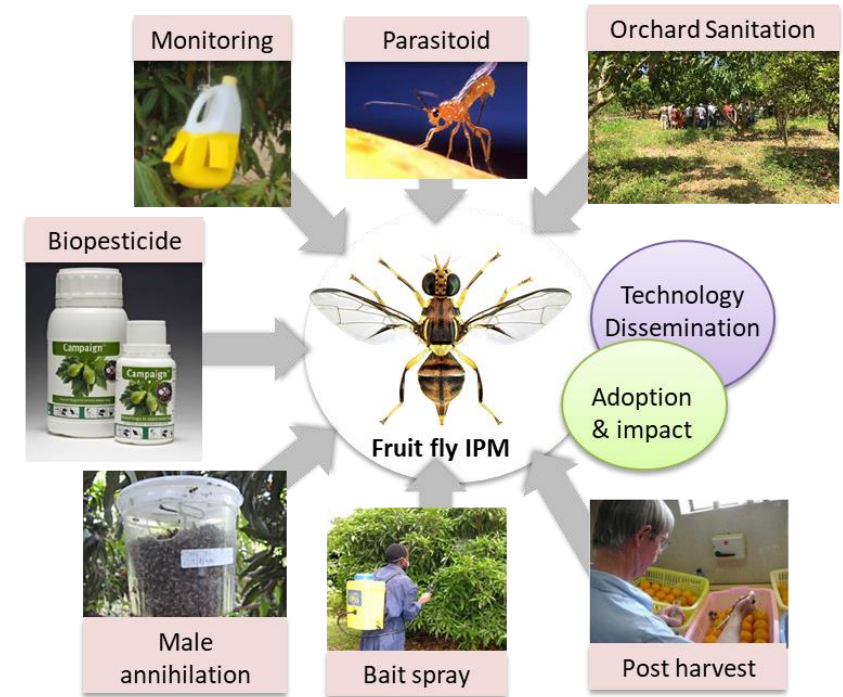
Three main findings:

- Articles that describe well an **“easy to apply” solution** are leading often to the implementation of a technology or innovation.
- Implementation / trial by farmers is influenced by whether farmers **seek additional information** beyond what they read from MkM, and further by how many additional sources of information farmers consult.
- Motivation to implement is highly influenced by **economic / profitability considerations**.



## Partnerships – Link to ICIPE's Mango Fruit Fly Project

- In 2021, one Radio programme on fruit fly IPM measures was aired on the vernacular Radio station Mbaitu FM in Kikamba.
- An estimated 200,000 farmers listened to the programme.
- Additional information was dispatched through social media platforms (e.g. Twitter and Facebook).
- A WhatsApp group was created bringing together model mango farmers and extension officers from Biovision Africa Trust & ICIPE\*.
- Bulk SMS messages were sent to targeted farmers.




**mbaitu**  
92.5 FM / 100.5 FM / 100.4 FM  
Machakos / Matungu / Kitui / Mwingi

How to manage fruit fly and powdery mildew in mangoes

- How does fruit fly and powdery mildew attack mangoes?
- How can one distinguish between fruit fly and powdery mildew?
- Which is the best way to control?

Tune in on Friday at 8:30-9:00 pm with Macdonald Mathew and our guest Margaret Kioko.



\*ICIPE: International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology





## Summary

### The Farmer Communication Programme...

- is built on diverse activities, information channels and farmer interactions;
- bridges the gap between research and its implementation;
- leads to the adoption of agroecological farming practices;
- gives voice to farmers.



# THANK YOU!



Martin Schmid  
Co-Head of Development Projects  
[m.schmid@biovision.ch](mailto:m.schmid@biovision.ch)



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sustainable  
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